



Jewish elders chain themselves to the White House fence on December 11, 2023. Credit: Jewish Voice for Peace

Chained to White House Fence, Jewish Elders Chant 'Cease-Fire Not Genocide'

"Don't let them tell you it's complicated," said one participant. "Palestinians are being slaughtered. Not just by bombs—also by starvation. It has never been more important that we act."

EDITOR'S NOTE: In an email to *La Voz* sent by elder Betty Campbell of Casa Tabor in El Paso she points out that mainstream media is not covering protests such as this one that was recently organized by Jewish elder women in front of the White House.

By Jake Johnson, *Common Dreams*

A group of Jewish elders chained themselves to the fence in front of the White House on Monday to demand that President Joe Biden end his opposition to a permanent cease-fire in the Gaza Strip, where virtually the entire population is going without adequate food, clean water, and proper medical treatment as Israel's assault continues with no end in sight.

"Biden, Biden, pick a side, cease-fire not genocide!" chanted the demonstrators, who wore shirts that read "Not in Our Name."

Eighteen women took part in the civil disobedience, which came hours before the White House's annual Hanukkah Party.

"Don't let them tell you it's complicated," said Karen Ackerman, former political director of the AFL-CIO and a participant in Monday's protest. "Palestinians are being slaughtered. Not just by bombs—also by starvation. It has never been more important that we act."

As they were chained to the White House fence, the elders read aloud the names of Palestinians who have been killed by Israeli forces since October, starting with 93-year-old Mahdiya Abdullah Abdul Wahab Halawa.

"My ancestors survived the Holocaust, so I know the price of silence," said Deborah Kaplan, a reproductive justice and maternal child health advocate. "I refuse to be silent now."

The 18 demonstrators were arrested.

The protest came amid a global day of action calling for an end to Israel's assault on Gaza following the U.S. veto of a cease-fire resolution at the United Nations Security Council late last week.

As the elders chained themselves to the White House fence, demonstrators gathered in the Senate atrium to demand that the U.S. stop providing arms to the Israeli military, which has used American-made weaponry to commit atrocities in the Gaza Strip.

The U.S. Senate is currently debating a foreign aid supplemental package that includes more than \$10 billion in military assistance for Israel, which already receives nearly \$4 billion a year in U.S. military aid.

On Friday, the U.S. State Department formally moved to bypass the congressional review process to rush 13,000 rounds of tank ammunition to Israel. As *The New York Times* reported, the State Department notified congressional committees that it was moving forward with the sale just before midnight on Friday.

"Our district didn't send President Biden to the White House to have him facilitate the killing of innocent civilians. We didn't turn out in huge numbers to elect President Biden to have him supply the bombs for a genocide," Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) said in a statement Monday. "This administration's refusal to acknowledge the human dignity of Palestinians is disturbing, and actions like this speak loud and clear."

Biden administration officials have publicly urged Israel to take concrete steps to protect civilians in Gaza, but there's no evidence Israel has altered its indiscriminate approach. According to one estimate, 90% of the more than 21,022 people that Israeli forces have killed over the past two months have been civilians.

"Israel is murdering elders, children, doctors, journalists, scholars, poets," said Rosalind Petchesky, who joined Monday's protest outside the White House. "We demand an end to this cataclysmic nightmare."

BIO: Jake Johnson is a senior editor and staff writer for *Common Dreams*. Their work is licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). Articles are free to republish and share widely.